

Appl. No. 09/602,477  
Amdt. dated April 1, 2004  
Reply to Office action of December 1, 2003

## REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claim 1 is amended herein. Claims 2-4 have been allowed.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiba, U.S. 5,714,195. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The present invention bears many important distinguishing features over the method shown in U.S. Patent 5,714,195 (the "Shiba patent"). Amended claim 1 recites that the defect to be corrected "is not substantially constituted by the presence of a foreign body ...."

In the Shiba patent, the laser is used only for the purpose of removing a foreign body. But in the present invention, the laser is used principally to create a circular depression, adapted to receive ink from an ink jet printer, in the filter. An ink jet printer tends to emit ink in a circular pattern. Accordingly, a noncircular defect would necessitate the application of ink to areas that are not defective, thereby resulting in excess ink over some portion of the filter. Also, an irregularly shaped defect might not permit ink to flow into an area that requires added ink.

Although the Shiba patent shows the correction of many defects unrelated to the presence of a foreign object, there is never a suggestion of using a laser to create a depression in a

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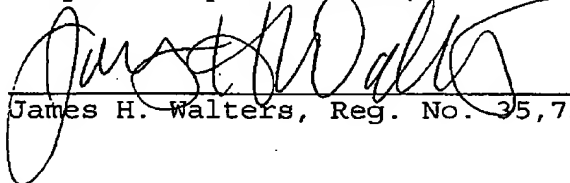
shape that will facilitate the task of patching the defect. Indeed, in FIGS. 7A-9B there is no suggestion that excess ink could be a problem. Likewise, there is no suggestion that ink not flowing properly to fill up the entire defect could be a problem.

Moreover, the Shiba patent gives no suggestion of "setting a diameter of a laser beam" in order to set the size of the depression created by the laser, even when the Shiba patent discusses using a laser to remove a dirt particle. It is possible that due to the small size of the typical dirt particle, Shiba et al. never needed to adjust the size of the laser beam in order to perform this task. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that the present invention as claimed in claim 1 has a nonobvious purpose and achieves that purpose in a nonobvious manner, through the use of a nonobvious mechanism. Therefore, it is submitted that claim 1 is allowable.

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In light of the above noted amendments and remarks, this application is believed in condition for allowance and notice thereof is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is asked to contact applicant's attorney at 503-224-0115 if there are any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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